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RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 8072  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 NEW DELHI 000079

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [EAID](#) [EAGR](#) [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [AF](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)  
SUBJECT: KARZAI VISIT TO INDIA "SYMBOLIC" OF AFGHAN  
SOLIDARITY

REF: NEW DELHI 02874

Classified By: POLCOUNS Ted Osius for Reasons 1.4 (B, D)

¶1. (C) Summary: Afghan President Karzai met January 12-13 with Indian Prime Minister Singh to express solidarity with India in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks and to discuss counterterrorism cooperation. The two leaders also lauded India's contributions to Afghan reconstruction, pledged to further improve the "special" bilateral relations, and announced India's offer of 250,000 metric tons of wheat to aid Afghanistan's current food crisis. Afghanistan's Ambassador to New Delhi suggested India could play a larger role in helping Afghanistan establish democracy, as well as provide training for Afghans in India, while expressing his personal view that security assistance should not be subject to a veto based on Pakistan's concerns. End Summary.

----- Deliverables: Solidarity, Satisfaction and Wheat -----

¶2. (C) Afghan President Hamid Karzai traveled to New Delhi January 11-12 for what the Indian Ministry of External Affairs described as a "symbolic" visit to express solidarity with India in the wake of the November terrorist attacks on Mumbai. During the visit, Karzai and Prime Minister Singh called for unnamed states -- read: Pakistan -- to fully comply with bilateral, multilateral and international obligations to prevent terrorism and support for terrorist groups. The two leaders also expressed mutual satisfaction for India's contributions to Afghan reconstruction and the direction of "special" bilateral relations, pledged better relations in the future, and announced India's offer of 250,000 metric tons of wheat to aid Afghanistan's current food crisis (more below).

----- India "Doing a Lot"; Could Help with Democracy,  
Education -----

¶3. (C) On January 13 PolCouns met with Afghan Ambassador Raheen for a readout of the visit. When asked what more India could do to help Afghanistan, Raheen reiterated Karzai's statement in Delhi by saying that India was already doing "a lot" considering all the domestic issues it is faced with, i.e. extreme poverty and unemployment, a poor education system, underdeveloped infrastructure, etc. Raheen pointed out India's ongoing efforts to help Afghan capacity building and highlighted the significant role India could play in

teaching Afghanistan about democracy through Parliament members and journalists.

¶4. (C) Academic programs with the aim of sending Afghan students to India are highly regarded in Kabul, Raheen stated, mentioning the increase in scholarships awarded by India to Afghan students from 500 to 1000. He expressed appreciation for the efforts India has made to continue and expand these programs, and suggested they would be another possible area for expanded assistance.

¶5. (C) Additionally, Ambassador Raheen opined, police training "would be a good idea, if they (India) could do it." He specified the need for the National Police to be trained, not any police, and did not seem concerned over potential Pakistani objection to this. The Pakistanis are "paranoid about everything," Raheen maintained, but that should not stop India and Afghanistan from pursuing such a program, he suggested.

----- Indian Wheat to Afghanistan: Transportation an Issue  
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¶6. (C) P.M. Singh pledged to gift Afghanistan with 250,000 metric tons of wheat to help the food crisis in Afghanistan, and confirmed this donation in a discussion with Ambassador Mulford on January 13. According to the Joint Statement, the shipment will be effected immediately, as soon as the Government of Afghanistan has worked out its transportation arrangements. Ambassador Raheen told PolCouns that this was

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originally supposed to be a gift of 25,000 tons and that the Indian's had been "very kind" to increase it by so much. Karzai told Singh, according to Raheen, that Pakistani President Zardari had promised to help in getting the wheat shipped directly through Pakistan to Kabul, but Raheen seemed skeptical about the ability of Zardari to make it happen.

¶7. (C) However, Post's contacts indicated that the issue of how to transport the large wheat donation could be problematic. Ministry of External Affairs (Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran Division) Deputy Secretary Piyush Srivastava told PolOff that the transportation modalities would have to be worked out by Afghanistan ) India would simply be donating the wheat. "We too were wondering", said Irfan Ahmed from the Pakistani High Commission, when asked if Pakistan would allow the wheat to be transshipped through its borders. Pakistan claims Indian wheat is contaminated with a fungal disease called Karnal Bunt, and Ahmed pointed out the contamination risk this poses to Pakistani wheat, but said all discussion now is speculative and he hoped to be better informed once the Pakistani Ambassador returned at the end of the week from Islamabad. Post notes that the cost for transporting the wheat from India to Afghanistan is high and logistically complicated. Of the options which might be considered, the most economical way of transporting the wheat would be to ship it by train from India's Punjab region through Pakistan and then by truck at the end of the rail line in Afghanistan. It would take approximately 2500 railway cars for this large amount of wheat, but the alternative of trucking it through is highly unrealistic as it would take 25,000 trucks at 10 tons a truck. Nevertheless, if Afghanistan were successful in arranging for the wheat shipment to be trucked from India through Pakistan's roads, a new precedent might be set for the transportation of commercial goods going from India to Afghanistan, a much desired alternative.  
MULFORD